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EDITORS

A. Wilber Stevens Elizabeth Dewey Stevens

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS TO

Marney George Harmon Jay Reese Helen Call Robert Jackson

EDITOR'S NOTE

To the intrepid subscribers of INTERIM, Volume I, Number 1, we expressed "a fear of failing to find good material, stubborness in refusing to print before we did find it." These commitments are as true to us today as they ever were. And this issue, which we present as a double issue, does not posit any values which differ from them. We say this, not as a challenge to evoke comments, but as a statement of our true feelings. Nothing is so disastrous to a literary magazine as for it to apologize for the fact that it exists.

A. W. S.

The Tanner

The tanner did not want Elsie, his niece, to marry Bjarne, the grocer's widow's son. The tanner was old and if she married, who then, would sweep the floors and bake the bread?

So now when he spoke to Elsie, his smile was oily and his voice soft as silk, "The widow, since the Jew opened the store across the street, cannot sell as cheaply and soon the store will be closed and then where will you and the grocer's son be? My shop is full of hides and I sell now purses and bags not only to the people on the street, but also to the big shops uptown. This, then, when I die, will be yours, but what will a grocer's son do in a tanner's shop? Let him weigh his sugar and flour and in time, you will find a husband that will sit at my work table in the shop and make purses and help me with the hides."

He would not have the grocer's widow in his house, God knew. She was sharp of tongue and peered into him as if he were a looking-glass. The tanner could smile and talk softly, but when he was with the widow he looked on the ground and said nothing.

Elsie bent her head and a faint flush spread over her cheeks. Bjarne was tall and had a way with him. When he knocked on the door the tanner said, "Elsie is reading her Bible and this is no time to talk to her."

Elsie was a good girl and no one could say she wouldn't make a man a good wife.

Every Sunday Bjarne knocked on the door and every Sunday the tanner sent him away. Elsie bent her head lower and her cheeks became pale as the summer wore on. The tanner sat alone by the long table in the shop, scratched his head, and turned over in his mind the young men on the street, and would even one be the man for the shop? He could not think of even one.

It was not until the sailor came to the street that the tanner rubbed his chin and peered out of the corner of his eyes. If the sailor would marry Elsie, then he would not be at home, but away to foreign lands. Elsie would sweep the floors and bake the bread ,and the sailor would send his money home. This, then, would give him money for hides. The sailor it should be.

But Elsie said, "I should not like for a husband a man who sails on the sea, a man I cannot cook and sew for. And who should I go to church with? If there are children, I shall be alone and children need the guiding hand of a father."

But the tanner raised his eyes to heaven and said, "But there is a Father in heaven, Elsie, and shouldn't He look to the children? What has the Bible taught you, if not that?"

Elsie bent her head meekly. The tanner was right. But even so she looked at the grocer's widow's boy who had a way with him. The sailor was stocky and his nose was askew and his words were few.

It was then that the tanner told the street that the banns would be read three times for the sailor and his niece, Elsie. The street looked at the sailor who was, indeed, stocky and his nose askew, and shook their heads. What did Elsie, who was smooth of skin and had hair like the sun, want with the swarthy sailor? There was bad foreign blood in him, that was sure. No one knew where he came from. The street looked with pity in their eyes at Elsie, but the tanner smiled and talked softly and the sailor sat at the tanner's table and ate his food and sat on the tanner's steps.

But the grocer's widow, when she met the tanner going to his shop, talked to him sharply and quickly, "Why is it, then, that you do not let Bjarne come to your house and sit on your steps? Is he not good enough for a tanner's niece? Elsie is a pious girl and no one can say she will not make a good wife for any man, but Bjarne knows his catechism, too, and he has read the Bible more than you, tanner. No one can say that he walks at night with the girls. Well, then, the sailor, who is a foreigner and swarthy, comes to your house and sits on your steps and Elsie is pale as death and I know this, she loves Bjarne and would go to the altar with him. Bjarne has told me so. But you say no? Why, then?"

The tanner looked at the ground and changed the snuff from one cheek to another. His strong yellow teeth showed as he screwed up his mouth in a smile. The tanner did not know what to say to the grocer's widow. She was a woman of cunning and it would be well to be careful of the words he used. Out of the corner of his eyes he saw the widow's hands clasped tight around her shawl, but he did not look at her face. He changed the snuff again and said softly, "It is so that Elsie likes the sailor. She wants to go to the altar with him and travel in foreign lands. That is the way of the young. Should I, then say no?" The tanner was, indeed, pleased with himself. He had not, God knew, until this moment known what to say.

But the widow squinted and peered at him and the tanner squirmed and felt surely that he was a looking-glass for the widow, and that she could see his very thoughts as she said, "And it is news, indeed, that a sailor takes his woman on a ship, and it is not like Elsie to leave her own people and travel in foreign lands. No, tanner, I shall talk to you before long and then you might have a better tale." She clasped her shawl and went her way.

The tanner scratched his chin and said, "The devil take the woman!"

The days went by. The banns were read twice and Elsie watered the green myrtle in the window that was to be cut to make a wreath for the bride's veil. The sailor sat on the steps and the tanner's smile was oily and his voice soft as silk.

And so it was that the tanner came one morning into his kitchen and the stove was cold and the floor unswept. The tanner frowned. It was not like his niece to lie abed in the morning. She was up with the first factory whistle and when the tanner came to the table, the bread was fresh and the coffee hot. The tanner thought of Elsie's pale cheeks of late and that it might be that the girl was ill. The tanner was fond of his niece and now he hurried as fast as his old legs could carry him to Elsie's room.

The bed was neatly made but the tanner's niece was gone. On the table by the bed he saw a small piece of paper. The tanner hurried to the kitchen

to find his reading glasses. And so he read, "The grocer's widow, when she heard you wanted a sailor husband for me, told Bjarne that now he had better ship out to sea if he would marry me. The grocer's widow, who has more money than you know, gave Bjarne enough for me to live on till he comes back from sea. I shall stay in the big town where his ship comes in and wait for him. It would be sin to live in wedlock with the stocky sailor whom I do not love. I did not do this lightly but with much thought and the grocer's widow's advice. God bless you and forgive me. Elsie."

The words that came to the tanner's mind again and again, when his thoughts should have been on Elsie and the ungrateful ways of the young, were: The grocer's widow has more money than you know! When he should have called her a devil woman it came to him that the grocer's widow was, indeed, cunning, and he slapped his knees and chuckled aloud. And as the days went by, he did not think so much about his niece but about the widow's money. His floors were unswept and he bought his bread at the bakery as no poor man should. He walked to his shop and sat at the long table, sewing his purses and thought about the widow's money.

So it was that one night, coming home from the shop, he saw smoke come from his chimney and the step was swept clean. Elsie, then, must have come back and if the grocer's widow's son was with her, then maybe he should let him come to the shop and learn the tanner's trade and the widow, who had more money than he knew, would buy the hides.

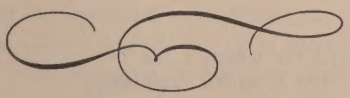
But when he walked into his kitchen there was the widow and the smell of roasted meat and fresh bread came to him.

The tanner stopped on the threshold and did not know what to say. He looked down on the floor and changed the snuff from one cheek to another. But the grocer's widow said, "And now, then, Elsie is gone and Bjarne, and I have no one to sweep the floor for and no one to praise my bread. Since we are now one family, it is best I should sweep your floor and bake your bread."

The tanner sat down on a chair. His legs were not as strong as they had been. The grocer's widow peered at him with her sharp eyes and the tanner peered back.

The tanner slapped his knees and chuckled and said, his voice full of goodwill, "The Devil take the woman."

The grocer's widow put the roast and the rolls on the table and said, her voice less sharp and quick than before, "Come and eat, tanner."



KENNETH YASUDA

Haiku

Calm and so serene,
Shadows from the pool reflect
On the silken screen

* * *

Whistling I pass
By the cosmos swaying high
In a fluttering mass.

* * *

Red, and white, from cool
Leaves camellia-blossoms fall,
Shining on the pool.

* * *

Lilac's scent in air:
The eyebrows of the blind-girl
Are so still and fair.

* * *

Floating down alone,
Red camellia-blossom slides
Over the smooth stone.

* * *

Glistening bright and big
Are the rain-beads of first spring
On a weathered twig.

* * *

Dropping, in a mass,
Fall the fire-flies from the stalk
To the blades of grass.

* * *

In the leaves I see
And in music seek again
Autumn eagerly.

The October Fair

(for Thomas Wolfe)

I.

Beyond the closed door on the hearth, beyond the sunlit steel
Kniving into the mystic night of distance, beyond
The solid drive of wheels, and safely on beyond
The darkly brooding forests prowling to the frozen north,
He saw the glorious cities rise, white columns in the sun.

And the song of the land hammered warm and red at his eardrums;
The past of man walked tall as the god, heroic on his mind's young stage;
The forests, the fields, the cities, the songs of America
Sounded a symphony vast and comforting; myth men strode the page,
While gathered in the tempest of his being
A golden cyclone of sounds and scents, the low storm surge of rage.

Child of the sun, and traveller through the garden of earth,
The measured garden of these poor histories,
God rose vast and beautiful through the roaring music of words;
Through the dusty swirling centuries the dead and broken poets
Built man the God, fleet child of the God, and firm on his spinning earth.

Child borne of the cancerous histories in the frightened heart of man,
Lost in our blood's bitter winter, beneath a sky grown dark—
Hail still the cities golden, arched to the height of the future,
The past no curse forgotten but a memory soon to blossom—
Stand in the fierce new sun of youth and know it in your heart!

Children of the autumn and the earth's sweet weather,
Borne to the gathering seasons, to the harvest ripe with sun,
We see through the woodsmoke flushing the amber dawn—
Familiar, the meadows of peace by our father's home.
Reborn of our youth, the earth lies great before us,
Her music rich with echoes, and all her cities glorious,
While flame of the morning roars through our singing veins
The journey into the epic earth—the door into our home.

II.

The leaves drift in sorrow through the stalking winds,
To rattle a sad fulfillment down the wintry streets;
The meadows spread grey wastelands, and stricken with the winter
The earth lies stripped and beaten—
Storm mournes through the trees.

Great awkward child, losing forever the softened hills of home,
The refuge of the hearth, for the pitiless road;—
Remember through the winter dawn, remember on that shore
Stolid and ominous with tempest-—
Morning was ever lost in night: Death lies beyond the door.

III.

In the end we will arrive in the City of our choice
And walk the virgin stone of it, and wonder at the dark
In every window, every door, and there will be no man
To touch and whisper brother we will find the wintry park
To rest there in the ages, knowing there is no dawn.

In the city through the searching of the desert streets,
Beneath the dull smoke-weary sky, under the chilling roof,
Faintly comes the pealing of the sunset bells;
In the empty room the darkness slowly crumbles down; immense
And lost in distance, the last train wails and leaves.

And lost in the sea of the midnight streets
You turn the inevitable corner, and stumble on yourself.
It is only a gesturing shadow, a strangely familiar face—
A map of frightened childhood, a long-remembered name,
A mouth too soft to ever hurt, young eyes too lost to hate.

And the helpless die between the brutal doors of our time,
Their syphiletic breath is ours, and they have touched his hand
Whose memory only, small and dead, lies in the darkened room.

But treacherously the ruin within, the ancient fear betrays
To slay the common child in man, the exile from the womb.

Then flight through the sweltering subways from the touch of the clammy hands,
Past stone-blind eyes as old as time, the eyes of the murdered young;
Then race through the towering mausoleums, down all the asphalt ways
Fleeing the tortured brute in man, the ruined face of the child
Who dies stillborn as his father died, unnamed in the nameless mob.

The scent of the charnel house of man swept through his numbing mind;
Lost the scent of meadows soft with sweet October's breath.
So pity rolled over the landscape of his heart, and on the wind
Tired voices old as wisdom spoke, and all the truth of men
Whispered "Here is the father. Here is the home. Here in the autumn of death."

IV.

Still in the winter of the mind, still in the death of the vibrant flesh,
The hymns of old October return in a scarlet flash
Of trumpets through our traitorous minds, and sharp through drifting dust
A single blade of sun lights yellow planets in the air—
We smell the wind on the warm red maize in the valley where we live.

And we give the Autumn coloring, the gold that mottles green,
And we return once more through darkened forests to the south;
The land lies sweet with all the coverts we will never pierce,
Autumn stacks on laughing hills where there shall be no drouth—
The sound of violins and dancing echoes in our ears.

The limpid winds of old October flow from our valley home,
And comforting, our father's hand, and through the ripened sun
The child returns from tragedy, and is no more alone,
But rests upon the meadows, and warms beside the run
Of slow and silent rivers, the waters of our home.

V.

Now in the seedtime of our world, now in the dusk
They wander the ruined lands of birth, searching for the home
Where they shall see as it was in the beginning, high on every hand
Autumn lie in plenty, where the winters cannot fall
Through red smokes of the city, through bullet pitted walls.

In the ancestral gardens, late in the dusk
He walked the hills they walked in the night of time—
And no man has left a path through the smoking rubble
But midnight dives on the city, where tortured and blind
The siren's steel pity screams out to the buckling sky.

And none shall measure the age of man, the tear stained child
Fearless in infancy, brave on the brink of the cliff—
In terrible games once more they march through black and swirling smoke
Of a burning world; in shivering lines, gauntly afraid, but stiff
In ancient play of children, with terror whitened lips.

We come to our defeat through the gods we have made;
And now in the night of gathering storm
The martyrdom of peoples to the naked blade of hate
Burns fear white-hot to bravery, and we are truly born
To death, our courage brightened in the fallen city's blaze.

At last the hymns of old October break in the twilit dark,
And we are trapped in helplessness, or fleeing we shall fall
Into the trenches of our fear, and kill through the murderous haze,
Our eyes gone blind to see the brother innocents we slay—
So we shall die defending, and kill for what we hate.

VI.

The leaves have fallen with the burning planes;
The limb is sharp and bare to the snarling wind.
Blows one sweet cold remembrance of lilacs through our minds,
Then winter comes, the darkness and the sleeting and the rains.

Now in the seedtime, now in the dusk, let us remember
The hills stretching into the sunrise, the hills we walked upon
In that dim remembered morning with spring sharp in our mouth,
And those we loved about us by the warm walls of our home—

Let us remember morning in the valley to the south.

VII.

Child, great blinded child, turn at last from the old October
Return to the city winter, the blockades clotted with life,
The murderous gas, the marching men, the thrust of gleaming steel
Cutting the cord of infancy, and lost to child and man—
Stalk through the ruins of this subway hell, your rifle in your hand;

At last from the birth, from the anguished weeping
To the rocky plains, the winter barrens, here is the home you found.
The marching men, the wave of the dead, the nations on parade
Drumming through the gathering shadows of the great October fair.

The child shall no more sing and run through the twilight smoke of home;
The child has fathered the killer, and he shall voice his joy
Hunting, with a rifle, the stumbling child of man;
Through the ruins of the fallen city, through the piteous subway lairs,
The men hunt down October with the red maize in her hair.

Somewhere yet a clearing in the dark and timeless wood
Where lilacs lace the air with a moist and perfect blue;
The pastures roll lush waves upon an aching world of green.
The sun splays arrow rivers, and the rich grey from the flues
Builds on the wind the columns of the cities yet to be.

It is the story of a child who closed his eyes
Before his birth, before his death;
A perfect child who turned to the night and died;

Perhaps the night remembers the sorrow in his eyes;
Perhaps the earth remembers a glorious lover dead—
We remember the sorrow of a great fulfillment lost.

The child lies cold and still, and lies forever dead
In the darkened womb of his autumn lands, the quiet unanguished head.

VIII.

The leaves skirl down the darkened streets, and all the sorrow left
On the face of the earth is as it has been, and as it ever shall be;
The child who laughed at the southern dawn, the child so early dead
Has found the ever perfect lands, has found his father's home.

And we turn from our killing, to lay October's maize
Sweet with the dust of summer on the tomb of him, our dead;
Red harvest of our anguish we lay on the final stone—
Warm hand of the earth he loved so well, the sunny dust of maize
Drifts through the chill of winter dusk, toward the winter dawn.

KARLIG NALDIAN

CHAIR

KEITH BOTSFORD

Love
Song
One

Adagio Molto: The Quiet City

Alone, quiet city, asleep on your curve,
the framework palace dreaming remains
a tangent fiction, your vacant maze
lies drowned, slow city, in opaque reserve:
lace conduits and flesh underly
danger, and trestles vanish into gloom
while vacant shutters flap in an empty room
a wailing siren trolls river mist from eyes,
and curlews unfurl you a tomb.
So then, giant city, stillness asleep, merge
your myth, husk, our facades entwine
on an artificial flower, our pain
is folded under each petal's hearse
unwind your wire, let each metal try
through architecture to resume
an underwater pose, so on that loom
weave patterns, in yourself submerge fire
or like an arch unleash your bloom
And now, sweet flower, can our hands so have turned
that your submarine stem, taut, strains
in the deep, and your urgent shape regains
its geometry? Once again, the nervous
wind tunnels you, and spires
must rise anguished underneath the sea, doom
our erect silences, and like rivers, are flown
only slowly, ashes from our kingdom's choirs,
to you,
quiet city,
alone.

The Clamdiggers

Chapter XVII

East Bend was fairly well up in the foothills of the Cascades. Beyond it rose the steep side of a mountain, embarrassingly naked above the timber line. By mid-June it had lost the ragged rock-scarred cover of snow that had kept back the trees, and now it stood ashamed in the sun. Above and behind it higher mountains, still patched with white, looked down upon it coolly.

The town itself was as raw as its mountain. In front of a cluster of weather-worn shacks that had been East Bend for twenty years had sprung up a row of white-painted frame buildings, glaringly new and sharply aligned along the street in which the caked mud-ruts were now crumbling into dust. Four of the new buildings—the blacksmith-shop, the store, the post office and the saloon— had square false-fronts. The hotel had a square front too, but windows in it indicated an upper story. The church was honest and ugly, with a high-peaked roof and a belfry. The town was set down in a gash in the wilderness. Though the forest swarmed up to within forty feet of its borders there was not a growing plant visible in East Bend except a hop-vine clinging to the sagging porch-roof of one of the old shanties.

There were a good many people about. Three men were loading a wagon with supplies in front of the store. There were half a dozen near the door of the blacksmith-shop, most of them in overalls, some of which were tucked at the bottom into high-topped hobnailed boots. At least two anvils were ringing inside the shop. There was much coming and going on the hotel steps and along the high board sidewalk with the occasional appearance of someone wearing a white collar and a city suit. The swinging doors of the saloon gave frequent glimpses of a crowded interior. There was one woman in sight, coming out of the store. Twenty foreign-looking men clustered about a heap of blanket rolls on the station platform.

In short, East Bend was booming. At the end of a railroad spur, it was several miles away from the construction line for a new transcontinental railway that was being flung across the mountains, and it was the point of entry for men and supplies for a long section of the work. Rough but practicable roads fanned out from East Bend to forty miles of contract work. During the last year the East Bend post office had been reclassified on the government scale, and the rising optimism of the East Bend postmaster was typical of the spirit of the community.

Ben shouldered his dunnage bag and made his way from the station to the hotel. He dropped the bag at the entrance and walked up to the desk between two rows of spittoons that marked the way like buoys along a ship canal. He asked for Mr. Bickell.

"Guess you'll find Bick over at the blacksmith's," said the clerk, looking him over with a protuberant and speculative eye. "Getting one of his rigs fixed up—he's taking those bohunks at the depot out to Prindle and Costigan's. Going to work in the camps?"

"Timekeeper for Prindle and Costigan," said Ben. "They told me Mr. Bickell would see that I got out there."

"Sure. Tell Bick about your roll and he'll throw it in with the rest. I'd hike out ahead if I was you. Beat the outfit and keep clear of the dust. Take the south road and keep right on goin' till you get to the top of the switchback. Second road to the right after that will land you right in the camp."

He found Bick at the shop, and though the latter seemed to be totally without interest made his request amid the clamor of the anvils. It did not seem probable that he was heard and Bick went right on working the bellows for the smith.

But presently there was a lull at the nearest anvil and Bick said, "Chuck it on the pile over at the depot," and since the remarks seemed to be addressed to him as much as to anybody, Ben turned and walked out.

South of the town the timber had been extensively logged, and fires had run through the area more than once. The stumps were blackened and new forest growth had been effectively stopped. There was a feeble showing of hazel and hardhack and elder here and there, and occasional tangles of blackberry vine, but for the most part the valley was desolate back to the steeper slopes of the hills, along which the bared trunks of the timber's edge marched like a picket fence. Near the creek on the other side of the valley an occasional patch of green indicated an attempt at ranching, but Ben could see even at this distance that most of the shake and log shanties were already deserted and their tiny meadows gone to weed. He had read many editorials in the newspapers about the independence awaiting the settlers on logged-off lands. He wondered at the gullibility of those who believed them. Probably nobody believed them. These settlers must have been driven by desperation rather than lured by belief.

At the top of the grade, after an hour of tramping, he turned to look back. East Bend showed a few gleams of white among the trees beyond the big cutting. The bare rock-flank of the mountain behind it, softened by distance, had become a blending of dark pastels. The snowfields of the higher peaks had expanded as he climbed until what had seemed fugitive patches of retreating white now showed above the lower mountains as a lofty barrier, impregnable and immaculate. Through gaps between the peaks appeared still higher peaks, as if this gigantic aloofness ran away forever to the world's end.

Perhaps nature, anticipating the assault of man, had reared itself protectively into those unreachable heights. Down below men could slash and burrow, and fling their rubbish across the land; but up there a portion of the continent would always be as inviolable as the open sea. True, every one of those peaks had been "conquered" by a mountain climber some time or other,

a climber who had perhaps put his name upon a map. But no names were actually on the mountains. Men and their things and all their names would perish, all their litter rot at last into the earth, and the mountains would not know.

The second road to the right ran through a flat of good untouched fir and hemlock and then pitched up another grade to the right-of-way. Half up Ben came out of the thinning timber and could see ahead of him the long fresh-cut rock slope of a fill. Directly above him clustered the unpainted buildings of the camp, new but already old in the few years during which they would stand, their rough lumber weathered just enough to be no longer bright in the sun.

Pat Costigan chanced to be in the combination store, office, and boss's sleeping quarters when Ben arrived.

"No," he said, "Prindle's not in camp. He don't stick around very much. He's only the engineer. I do the work. When your stuff comes chuck it in the cubby there—that's where you'll sleep. Here's the books, and I hope to God you can straighten 'em out—I haven't had a time-keep for a week."

He was a six-footer and weighed, Ben guessed, better than two hundred pounds. His slightly reddish hair stood up straight from his forehead, and together with his heavy jaw and huge fists said that he was ready for a fight, now or later, according to your pleasure.

"You go down the line twice a day and check off the men on the job," he told Ben. "Each man has a number—nobody could remember the names of these goddam wops and bohunks. You credit them with three fifty a day and charge off six bits a day for board. You take six bits out of the first pay-check for bringing in their stuff. You get it all ready and I sign the checks. See anything of a gang headed for this camp?"

"Bick is bringing them up."

"Twenty of the sonsobitches walked out on me yesterday when they got wise its a contract job and they couldn't sit around on their asses all day. I had to telegraph for twenty more. What did they look like—another lot of goddam bohunks?"

"They're mostly Russians, I think. There was one American I talked to, but I believe I'd pick the Russians."

"Like hell you would! He must have been a lousy bum! But they're all alike on this job. If we ever put a railroad through these mountains with this goddam scum it will be a goddam miracle, I say. You pay 'em three times what they're worth and then they walk out on you if they don't like the stew. How much do you weigh?"

"A hundred and fifty."

"Too light. See those pick-handles over there? You keep one of those handy on pay-day and if any of these bastards gets funny knock him out. I use that, myself." He knotted his maul-like fist under Ben's nose. "You'll be store keeper, too. Stuff on those shelves—socks and shirts, tobacco and snuff—whatever you see. There's a price list somewhere. And they pay

when they take it, by God. Well, look around. There's a half dozen white men in camp; you'll feed at our end of the table. See you later."

Ben looked over the books. He was glad that he had taken bookkeeping in his second year at high school, when he had a queer idea for one term that he might go in for that sort of thing. The books were tidy enough up to the last week's entries, and he thought he could untangle those. The names of the workmen were so difficult that his eye rested with relief on the more pronounceable ones like Mike Petroski and Anton Lazarevich. After having listened to the talk on the train he wondered that their English was equal to taking orders.

Stepping out of the building he looked up and down the roadbed which passed directly in front. As he observed the deep cut through solid rock that curved away from the fill and remembered the huge slope of the fill itself as he had seen it from below, he felt a profound respect for some unknown genius that held together that massed ignorance and animosity of men along a hundred perilous miles of construction and forced them ultimately to produce a railroad—an exact and continuous road of a smooth and practicable gradient through a region on which nature had so plainly marked No Thoroughfare. Below him and above him were other gangs of men, working separate sections, and it would all join so that people would presently look out of car windows and say, "Where are we now? I suppose we're late again. I wonder why they can't keep these trains on time."

Even he, Ben Newton, was being used after a fashion by that unknown presiding mind, and he understood no more of what was going on than he did of his own metabolisms. A fellow like Costigan, hammering his men through their motions, of course knew more than they or Ben about what was up, but he was working between lines of stakes which someone else had surveyed and driven. Prindle, their engineer, must have done that. But behind Prindle was another engineer, and behind him another. Behind the engineers, too, there must be a whole series of minds, officers of the railroad, financiers, statesmen. At that remove what could even a presiding mind know of what it was doing? What could a banker in Wall Street know of the problem of putting a railroad through the Cascade Mountains? Ignorance appealed to ignorance, backward and forward along this chain of minds, and finally a new railroad would be in existence, without anyone anywhere really knowing how it had been done.

As a matter of fact, who wanted or needed this railroad anyway? Ben didn't want it or need it, though he was willing to take his pay. Costigan didn't want it or need it, though he was doubtless glad to have his contract. If Wall Street wanted it that could only be because Wall Street would get its commission for financing the job. As for the people who would use the railroad, most of them would probably only notice its existence when they bought their tickets or shipped their freight. Nobody knew whether the railroad was wanted or needed, or whether the millions of dollars that were being poured into it would ever come out.

Probably most human enterprises were blind like that. Ben and Mort had once, up on the island, decided that they would make a dugout canoe from a

cedar log that had floated up on the beach. They found an old double-bitted axe among the tools in the corner of the woodshed and spent an hour on it at the grindstone. They selected two wide-bladed chisels from the rack above the workbench. They also took the plane and drawshave to the beach with them, and even some sandpaper for the ultimate finishing touches. They got one end of the log to a blunt point the first day, and Mort even splintered off some of the top round to suggest the general shape of the finished product. By the end of the week they had exhibited their work-in-the-progress to most of the other fellows, but they were no longer doing much on it. They never got beyond chipping out a foot-deep trough in the middle between sides still six inches thick. And besides, they had discovered a split in the log that would compel them to caulk the dugout, even if it held together that long. In the end they observed that their chips and splinters made a fine pile of kindling, and they built a beach fire against the dugout one day when they went swimming.

This railroad would doubtless be finished. The money, a lot of it, was already up; nobody would stop now until it was spent. But whether the railroad would be any better or more useful than the dugout might have been, nobody knew. It might even turn out like those brick blocks in Port Townsend that had never been occupied, ghosts in themselves, but unhaunted.

- 2 -

One afternoon a month later Ben came back to the office after touring the job and checking off the men at work. They had been friendly toward him, he thought—at least the older employees. The new men—and the turnover was rapid, the workers coming and going in gangs from town, or up and down the line from camp to camp—regarded him suspiciously at first as the representative of an employer, any employer, who would in the nature of things be an enemy. But they soon decided that he was fair, or harmless. They would spit on their tool-handles as he approached, or mop their brows, to imply that their movements were only for the moment relaxed and grin at him in amiable derision. Only when the boss was in sight did they actually work harder.

Not many of them were really surly. Perhaps they were not even lazy, but there seemed to be an unwritten law, an obligation both to themselves and their fellows, not to do more than immediate pressure required. Anything else would be treachery in a campaign against a perpetual foe.

Ordinarily an indifferent sabotage was enough to keep that foe in check, but occasionally there would be a quick tensing along the line of defense that would sharpen into aggression. Ben was beginning to grow sensitive to the signs. It would not be, as he had at first expected, when Costigan would come storming up to a group of workers, seize a pick from one of them as if he were going to lay about him, and then give a profane demonstration of what one good blow could do in the place of five. That, Ben discovered, was what was expected from the boss. The men tolerated the little show and went on working exactly as before. What was rather to be watched was any slight suspension of normal behavior among some group of workers who spoke the same tongue or who had arrived at the camp together. Once, when

Prindle was in camp and had directed Costigan to have done over a job which had just been completed, twenty men worked with surprising energy and in utter silence for half an hour and then threw down their tools as if at a signal. They had understood each other as completely as if every blow at the rock were a word.

Then, one evening at dinner, a platter of meat had been picked up and passed grimly from one man to another at the far end of the table, each man looking at it without taking a helping.

"Look at that," snarled Costigan. "Watch those sonsobitches!"

The clatter of a fork thrown on a plate was followed by a foreign oath and half the men at the table got up together and walked out. Ben worked till ten o'clock that evening, giving them their time.

Today Ben was expecting trouble. Mike Petroski, so proud of his broken English that he displayed it on every occasion, had been silent as Ben checked him off. Others were indifferent toward him too, ominously. No one spat on a pick handle, no one grinned at him or exchanged a greeting. Something was up.

When the men presently came off the job a knot of them gathered around the bunk-house door and seemed to be carrying on a gutteral debate. After a while Mike Petroski detached himself from the rest and walked slowly toward the office, where Ben was watching from the doorway. Mike kept looking in another direction, as if his approach were without intention, but he came to a stop in front of Ben and fumbled at a greasy wallet. He took the last and cleanest off a sheath of time-checks, of which he evidently had cashed none for weeks, and handed it to Ben.

"You fix him," he said. "Too much board bill. Six bits."

"What's that?" asked Ben. "You show me. What's wrong with it?"

"Too much. Six bits." He turned and shuffled off. Ben stared at the time check in his hand for a moment. Glancing up, he found all the eyes by the bunk-house door looking at him steadily: no movement, only a steady look, unwinking at this distance. Ben went inside and opened the ledger.

He found it instantly—the mistake, staring out at him from the page as unwinkingly as the men from the bunk-house door: Mike Petroski, six dollars for keep, instead of five twenty-five! A stupid error in arithmetic, so stupid that it looked more like intention than error. Ben picked up a pen and started to enter a seventy-five cent credit for Mike against next pay-day. As he did so his eye lighted on an adjoining account. Six dollars! He looked quickly through the last week's pay entries. He had overcharged twenty men by the same amount!

"What in hell are they all standing around for?" demanded Costigan, clomping into the shanty. "Don't those goddam wops know they got to wash up for supper?"

Ben sat looking desperately at the ledger, as if he expected the figures to change under his eyes. "I don't know how it could have happened," he said. "I always check everything—but there it is, plain as day."

"What is?"

"This rotten mistake. I've charged twenty men seventy-five cents apiece too much for board. Last week's check."

"Like hell you have! Let's see." Ben pointed it out in the ledger. "Guess you have, all right. By God!"

"I must have slipped on the first one and copied for all the rest."

"Kinda looks like it, don't it? I'll be a son of a bitch!"

"We'll have to credit them all with that much on the next pay-check. I guess I can make Mike understand that, and he can tell the others."

"And have them saying all up and down the line we can't keep our books straight? Not while I'm running this camp!"

"But we'll have to fix it up—we can't cheat them out of their—"

"Cheat? Who said anything about cheating?"

"But—"

"But Christ! The bill for keep has gone up in this camp, that's all. Seventy-five cents a week."

"But Mr. Costigan, they came with the understanding—"

"To hell with that!" Costigan hammered his huge fist down on the desk so hard that a pen jumped from the inkstand and rolled off onto the floor. "Seventy-five cents—do you get me?" We can't feed the way we do in this camp for any lousy six-bits a day, see."

"But what will they say—with all the others charged at the old rate?"

"To hell with that! You can't waste your breath explaining things to a lot of bohunks. I never explained anything to a wop or a bohunk yet, except with that." He exhibited a knotted fist. "I'm not beginning now." He looked out at the door. "They've gone in for grub. The music will come later. By Jesus, we'll give 'em as good as they send."

Costigan was standing by a principle. Ben wished that he were. He didn't know presently whether he was eating his meal or not. There was no place for him at this table. He was as far away from the men as he was from Costigan. It had not been like that when he came out of the woods behind the "A. B. Coe." He and Canada Joe and Shorty were one person. They talked to each other as they would talk to themselves. Why, Ben could even have quoted poetry to them at the last and they would have taken it, the way he took their whoppers about Paul Bunyan. It was the accent. They knew how you meant it, and that was how they took it. But now he was lost. He was a little finger at the paying end of the line and he was expected to behave like one. He did not feel like one. He did not feel like Costigan, to whom the situation presented no ethical question whatever. But he was not with the men, either. They knew where his orders came from, they knew he would have to obey them, or get out. Or get out. And would he get out? To what? Wasn't he starting at the university next year—to learn how to stay in? On the paying end? Oh, very humbly—but on the paying end. White collar Ben. Take it or leave it. We can get somebody else if you don't like it. Professor Newton. This, young ladies, young gentlemen, is Shakespeare—this comes from the white collar end. We are the payers. We teach and study Shakespeare—in white collars. We know where our bread and butter comes from.

There was an unwonted staccato of low voices at the other end of the table. A visitor unfamiliar to the camps might have wondered that there was

so little talk, but the half dozen Americans around Costigan exchanged significant glances, because there was so much.

"Every white man in camp sticks around till this is over," said Costigan. "Close to headquarters. We'll show these goddam bohunks who's running this shebang."

A half hour later, as Costigan sat on the counter engaged in an elaborate cleansing of his pipe and Ben hung despairingly over his ledger, three men, including Mike Petroski as spokesman, entered the shack. For a moment they were silent, standing close together just inside the doorway.

"Well, boys," said Costigan, squinting through his pipe-stem against the light, "what can I do for you?"

Mike shuffled his feet and looked fixedly at a corner of the ceiling.

"Shoot your stuff, Mike," said Costigan. "We haven't got all night."

Mike shifted his glance to another corner of the ceiling. "Twenty six-bits," he said at last. "Fifteen dollars. You fix him." He avoided Costigan and looked at Ben.

Costigan's heels thumped against the panel below the counter. "You're talking to me, Petroski," he warned. "I'm the boss here."

"All right," said Mike without looking at him, "you fix him."

"I'll fix you and your whole goddam outfit if you don't pipe down," growled Costigan. "You go back and tell your pals what I say. Last week they were kicking about the grub, and I fixed that up, see. If they want a regular goddam banquet three times a day they got to pay for it, see. You tell them that. Six-bits, eh? Christ, six-bits is easy!"

Mike translated this speech to his two companions. All three scowled blackly and there was a rapid interchange of foreign gutterals.

"No," said Mike, at the end of it, looking at Costigan now, though only at his throat, where the red hairs of his chest showed above his half-open shirt front. "No good. See." He took an employment-agency card out of his wallet and pointed at an entry. "Six-bits a day for board. God damn."

Costigan descended from the counter heavily. "Don't swear at me," he barked, "or I'll break your goddam jaw for you. I've told you what's what —now get out!"

One of Mike's supporters, a heavy-browed, deep-jawed fellow with a scar like an acute accent over one of his fanatical eyes, stepped past Costigan and lowered over Ben. With one fist hammering out his emphases on the open page of the ledger he poured out a torrent of unintelligible words with a wholly intelligible meaning. He ended his speech with a dramatic throat-cutting gesture of his finger, several times repeated. Ben could easily have believed that he was swallowing his own blood as he sat gulping after the onslaught.

Costigan came to his rescue. Grasping the throat-cutter by one arm and the back of his overalls he almost lifted the man across the room and pushed him headlong through the doorway. Mike and the third departed without waiting for more of this kind of debate. Costigan followed them outside and bellowed in a voice that rumbled back from the hills.

"Cook!" he roared. "Blacksmith, every white man!"

By the time the ominous surge of foreigners had reached the roadbed in front of the office the six Americans in camp were lined up opposite them,

each armed with a heavy white hickory tool-handle from the rack beside the counter. At fifteen-foot distance the approaching mob halted, and there was a momentary consultation at the middle of their line, around the throat-cutter who was evidently their leader.

Then the throat-cutter stepped forward a few feet and began to make a speech that sounded like a continuation of his harangue to Ben and the ledger. Costigan roared him down.

"If you can't talk English," he shouted, "shut up!"

The throat-cutter moved a little nearer, his supporters edging forward behind him.

Suddenly Costigan stooped to pick up a three-pound boulder at his feet. He hurled it with all his force at the throat-cutter's head. It narrowly missed its mark and went bounding among the stones of the level space beyond.

Ben held his breath. Now they would get it. Others beside Costigan could throw stones. (A frightened little Chinaman desperately trying to close the end of his laundry-wagon and whipping his tottering horse down Twenty-third Avenue. Ben with a stone in each fist facing a mob of little gangsters. But what now? Who were the gangsters this time?) Ben's eye was fixed on the throat-cutter, the toe of whose boot was against a jagged rock fragment that could cut a large hole in any man it struck. Grab it, Throat-cutter —there it is, right against your toe! Six of us in a row—you can't miss! Ladies and gentlemen, Throat-cutter versus Costigan — one-round for a knockout—no rules. Costigan from the Paying End. Six-bits. Throat-cutter —Throat-cutter—there at your toe, Throat-cutter! A hole right through Costigan, and through the plate-glass bank window behind him.

Throat-cutter!

But Throat-cutter's toe was no longer against the rock fragment. Throat-cutter was backing off, his line of supporters wavering with him. Costigan was forward, his red throat fiery in the slanting sunlight, his great fists knotted and slightly advanced at his hips. Behind him were six bank presidents, twenty deputy sheriffs and a company of the National Guard. They swarmed up on Ben and pushed him abreast of Costigan. Throat-cutter's line of defense broke and shuffled off in little groups toward the bunk-house. The National Guard and the deputies faded, the bankers dimmed until they were nothing but protuberant vests surmounted by eyeglasses reflecting the last rays of the sun. The sun set.

"The sonsobitches got about as much guts as so many piss-ants," growled Costigan. "Phone in a telegram for forty new men, Newton. We'll pay off the whole goddam outfit in the morning."

- 3 -

The mahogany desk was very wide and very long. There was a wire basket filled with papers at one end of it, a pen-and-pencil-holder and an ash tray at the edge of the blotting pad, and far out—islanded in gleaming varnish—a mounted brass nameplate reading "Mr. Millard." Mr. Millard himself was seated in the desk-chair, a little pile of opened letters on the pad before him. Mr. Millard, in spite of the wistful remoteness of his nameplate, was looking important.

"What's the matter with Costigan?" inquired Mr. Millard testily. "I know he can write his name because I find it at the bottom of plenty of checks. Can't he write a letter?"

"He thought I'd better come," said Ben. "You might want to know about things he might forget in a letter."

"As far as I can see it, he and Harry Prindle have made a blunder that is going to cost us two or three thousand dollars and I've got to find the money to cover it. The way those boys spend money you'd think a bank was a reservoir and all they had to do was open the tap. Who's responsible for this?"

"I don't know, sir. Mr. Prindle surveyed the level for the long cut and Mr. Costigan went down to it and then carried it across the fill. They've been finishing off for about a month, but it's six inches too high, and now it has to be done over again."

"How much time has Harry put in on the job lately?"

"I haven't kept track, Mr. Millard. He's come out two or three times since I've been there."

"Oh, he has, has he? That's considerate of him. Did he have a woman with him?"

"There was a lady with him once. They came in on horseback and only stayed a couple of hours."

"A straw-haired floozie?"

"She did have hair like that."

"Huh! I hoped he was finished with that one." Mr. Millard's nameplate burned a little brighter in its mahogany sea. "I told him to ring off on her or I was through. I don't give a damn if he is my brother-in-law. And I am through. If he and Costigan can't keep within their estimates they'll have to get another backer." But the gleam on Mr. Millard's nameplate was guttering out in the brownish-red that whelmed it.

"Maybe they think I'm made of money," suggested Mr. Millard a trifle plaintively.

"Mr. Costigan is feeling very bad about it, Mr. Millard. But he said you'd have to know about the increased estimate right away, so you could push it on to the higher-ups."

Mr. Millard's nameplate fairly leaped off the desk.

"The devil he did! Now what in hell did he mean by that?"

"I don't know, Mr. Millard. He said you would know how to take care of that."

Mr. Millard sank back hopeless into his chair. If he had possessed a life-preserver he might have swum out to the nameplate and clung to it calling for help; but Ben doubted whether he would keep afloat that far.

"All right, all right!" cried Mr. Millard. "I'll take care of it. But if I meet Harry Prindle with that straw-haired bitch during the next few days I'll pull every credit he's got out from under him. If he shows up in camp you tell him that for me." Mr. Millard got up out of his chair and advanced around the end of the desk toward Ben, who retreated in the direction of the door.

"And you can ask him one question. Put it to him straight. Just say to Harry Prindle, 'Bert Millard wants to know if this isn't the hell of a way to build a railroad'."

Ben found the doorknob and ducked out just as Mr. Millard's nameplate winked at him around Mr. Millard's elbow.

He would not have to ask Harry Prindle for an answer to Bert Millard's question. It was a hell of a way to build a railroad.

Two Poems by KENETH GORDON

Gray Souls

These souls of
Deathless,
Everlasting gray:
Too young to go,
Too old to stay . . .
Like driftwood
Toss on the swell of
The sea,
They wander
Aimlessly and
Go not gayly;
Nor do they weep
Wet tears
Upon the cheek . . .
These souls of
Deathless,
Everlasting gray:
Too young to go,
Too old to stay.
These souls with
Eyes,
Like winter sky's—
Not blind—have seen
The splendor of
Too many tender
Dawns
Go down dying beneath
The Death-heel of a
Heartless day:
Days that flay these
Souls of gray:
Too young to go,
Too old to stay.

These souls with
Boundless hearts, that
Frigid flow—
Formless,
Dream-tear-darlings
Earthward fallen in
The interim of a
Cosmic-god's
Creative contemplation—
Rock, roll and
Tumble in
Eternal Traumerei . . .
These souls of
Deathless,
Everlasting gray:
Too young to go,
Too old to stay.

Bus Depot

High aloft and aloof,
Pressed into the hard
Unfeeling surface of the wall,
The stolid dial of
The Depot clock . . .
Looks down.
Half round its cold face
They have waited, while
Down into glazed eyes,
Dropped long, killing minutes.
Sharp minutes, melted into
Solid hours . . . had formed
Rocks, too heavy to bear.
Suffering senses rubbed ragged
Throb the air, in
Silent protestation.

But clocks hear not,
Have only hands.

Strong in contrast, with the
Vulnerable flesh of man:

Shadowless, swift curved walls,
Formed into formless—modern mode,
Flow down, melt smoothly into the
Floor's sterile mortar mass.
Like filthy swine, in a
Too clean sty, they
Lie, lean and slump, all
Awry with
Bruised senses and brows
Wet with the torrid sweat of
War strangled travel.
Like the petals of a
Fragile flower, Vanity
Fades and falls.

But clocks hear not,
Have only hands.

Through these portals
Three hours ago, came
Tall, proud and with
Liquid grace, that
Long limbed girl in green.
Elegant her entrance but,
Alas,
The hour stones were too heavy.
Now, with body bent
Oblique across the bench—
The head, in twisted sag, sets
Neck cords ridged—as
Creased, in troubled
Semi-slumber, the
Smooth brow knits.
Cloying, her crumpled dress
Creeps up until, one
Sees with ease, where
Light loins weld with
Darker groin.
She spreads, gruesome and gangling.
Twisted like a Hell-hag, on the
Torture rack of Time.

But clocks hear not,
Have only hands.

The Church of Man

There was a Church in a Utah town,—
The widows and orphans burned it down;
The godless women rose in ire
And ran and set the Church afire.

This Church was built for natural man
To worship God by a natural plan;
But natural woman burned it low,—
Now over its ashes the rude winds blow.

In the Church of man, when it still stood,
Not a story was told but what was good;
You could hear God's name in every sound—
God's holy name went round and round.

The incense swirled so thick in there
It would have taken God to swear
If the high priest held the Book of Fate,
The Holy Bible, or an ace-high straight.

In the Church of man, when it still stood,
Man himself was the highest good;
And the tales he told of what was bad
Confirmed the poker hand he had.

A sacrament of man's own blood
Was offered and was understood,—
And man's own children's bread was eaten
There in case his hand was beaten.

The rites of billiard balls and beer
Brought many a sinful soul as near
Redemption as the best of Churches
Could assure, or the worst of birches.

WRESTLERS

The tale of Jesus in the stable
Was matched by many another fable;
The lessons of the guiltless Lamb
Of God became the bull of man.

No mystery was there, nor fear,
But vanished in the beaming beer;
And many a woman, before these kings,
Cringed, ousted of her underthings.

High deeds miraculous were storied,
The living man of God was gloried;
And legends of the loaf were shapened
Quite as if they might have happened.

A high priest told of hunting deer
Barehanded, catching one arear
And thrusting where the berries linger:
He ran ten miles to clench his finger.

And with a legendary team,
And with an enigmatic gleam,
They pulled a brick house, roof and casement,
While the bishop's bay mares moved the basement.

The priests of the Church of man are still
Now,—trading wits down under the hill,
Since long ago their women ran
With malice, a match, and a kerosene can.

And no beguiling of a fable
Restores them now, as dead as Abel,—
No magic over wind and wood
Restores the temple where it stood.

The Church of the priests of man is gone,
Though the word of God blows on and on;
And natural woman to natural man
Still acts as impious as she can.

LITHOGRAPH —JAMES KEENEY

DOUGLAS MacAGY

James McCray 1946

Writing of a time when Picasso stopped painting for two years, Gertrude Stein stated that the only way to disencumber oneself of a vision that has become alien is to turn from the techniques involved in its expression. This explanation may suggest a reason why James McCray stopped work shortly after the start of the war and why he resumed work during the past year with a different vision. His earlier pictures contain representations of recognizable objects, while his later ones are almost totally non-objective.

Formerly McCray's form depended on a particular treatment of objects which acted as icons, or symbols, with a variety of meanings. Recently I suggested that he abandoned this form because he was unable to resolve certain issues raised by the meaning context. (See CIRCLE 7-8, *Without Horizon*, p. 43.) These issues are not directly engaged by his present form. But it seems to me that his anti-mechanistic views, then more or less explicit, now are implicit.

Kandinsky once wrote that the "disintegration of the atom" affected him so that, "in the twinkling of an eye, the mighty arches of science lay shattered." Only then was he able to take leave of the pictorial object in his work and devote himself with confidence to the development of non-objective form. There is an air of freedom in McCray's late work that suggests a similar decision on his part.

No longer confined by iconic devices and symbolic attitudes, he is captivated by the dramatic potentialities of pictorial structure. Freed of the need to distribute objects about the canvas within a common setting of merely secondary emphasis, he can explore every corner of the picture and activate the remotest parts. Straight lines extend from edge to edge, stressing the major rectangle of the frame by paralleling both sides and creating smaller rectangles through their crossing. The small compartments, by-products of the lines which connect them all, become units in a pattern of calculated contrasts. McCray is intrigued by spatial illusion, and these units may contain as many as five types of illusion within limits of a single picture. Abrupt changes in scale, direction, hue and spacing quicken perception of the full expanse of the canvas. In this way a succession of surprises is staged.

McCray has an intimate knowledge of the formal traditions of art and he is conscious of the "classical" character of his current work. He feels the influence of artists such as Piero and Seurat. But to consider his procedure as pure intellection would be a mistake. As he works he is aware of dictates that are not consciously conceived, of what Kandinsky called "inner revelations," and on these he pins his faith in the form.

FLOTATION

JAMES McCRAY

JOHN WILLIAMS

Time, Place and Circumstance

I

Grant that Death is instantaneous and Time
is more than being here or there now or then
and Place is more than Africa or Rome
and Circumstance is more than if or when
and Time and Place and Circumstance
must be commingled in some
way: and grant that Time and Place and Circumstance
are unredeemable and cannot be had
by us: each is abstract in fact
and word, constitute together more
than mere abstraction, more than fact or word.
And grant the three-pronged formula points
in one direction
neither Past nor Future, Hither, Yonder, If or How,
but toward the apexed axis of dimension
which is as much as balance
to the Universe.

Time and Place and Circumstance:
they are doors we have not opened, cannot
open: doors we cannot walk through: doors
which have no simple handles, left to right,
through which we cannot stalk, cannot enter
the intensional room from this extended perch.

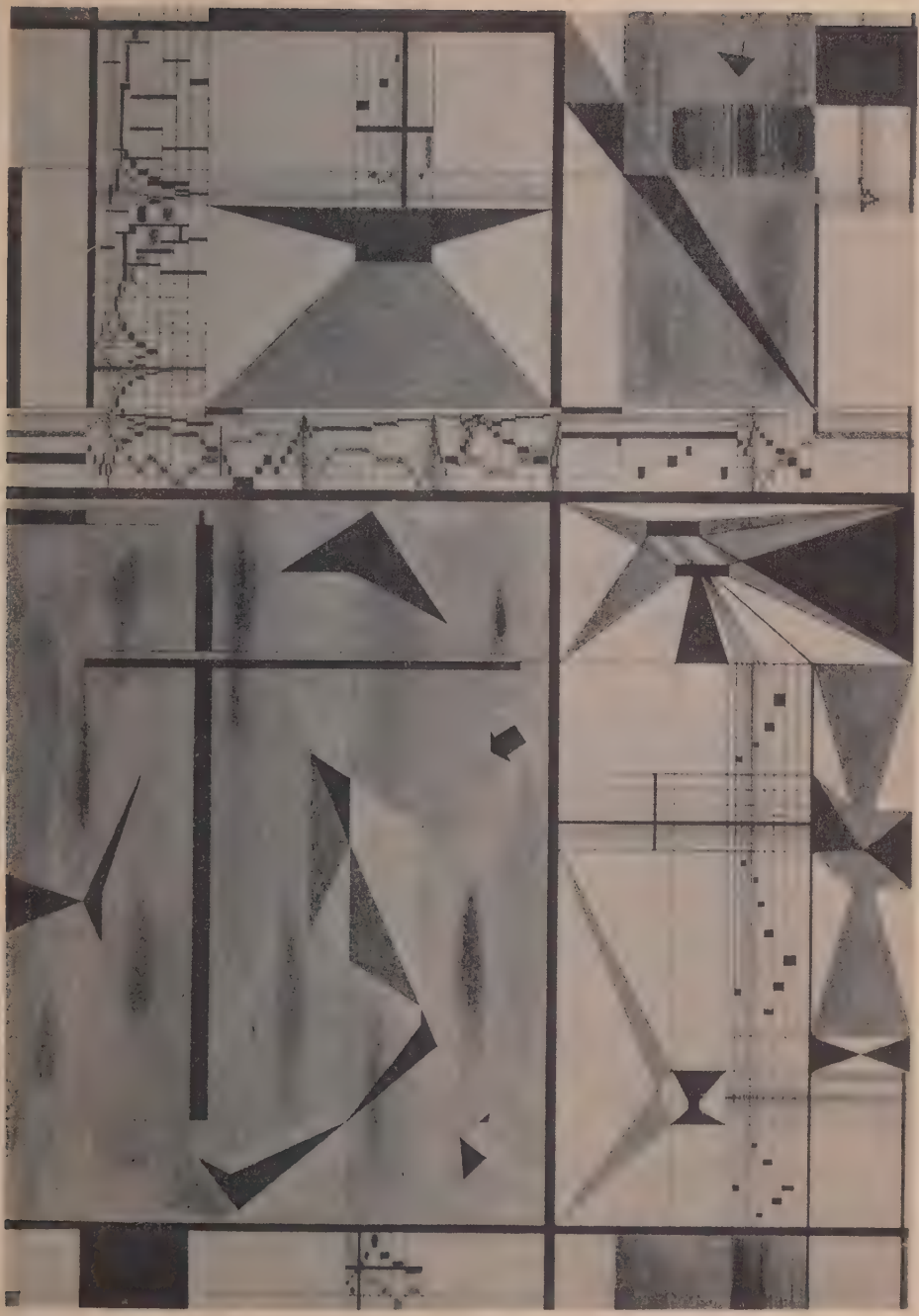
Alas: an empty voice exploits
the grey atom of experience.

II

The mind convolves in curious fashion
scattering like dry rose petals
in a whirlwind.

The pattern of the mind is prodigal
having no existence in itself
breath and echo to the Absolute
only: having no existence in itself
yet spreading outward from the static center
sending great concentric ripples out
which grow and disappear and reappear
and meet themselves and cause a mild disturbance.

The pattern of the mind is patternless.
Shadow of no shade, movement of no revolution,
blood of no flesh:
It is a charade that interests no one
glimpsed on a soiled screen.



JAMES MC CRAY

WIRES AND WOMMERAHS

Thus, the rank concupiscence of memory
takes us back beneath the shattered arch
into the garden: and we stray
along the broken paths between the row on row
of peonies, dessicate beneath no sun,
noticing beneath our feet a soft decay
of former stone. Thus, the grasping magic
of the mind preserves illusion:
thus the return to the garden in the afternoon
and the unimaginable spectre of time.
The inscription on the rotting garden wall
is new and startlingly discernible:

You have mistaken me

The petals of the peonies swirl and scatter
breaking dry-as-death upon the tired face
whispering into the stone ear:

We have not remembered you

and underfoot the brittle grass
is claw and tentacle unto our heavy plod
the wild untended vines whip
about our necks with mocking gentleness
and the grass says:

You have not walked here before

Place and Circumstance deny.

III

Message to a Youth:
you can no longer ride
flashing like the two-edged sword
that cleaves the sun
upon a prancing steed
you cannot ride beside
the jackass white as snow
upon whose back the princess sits
whiter than the whiter than
the snow: you cannot kiss
your bevelled blade and go
in search of fiery legends to
run down and through
and trample in the dust
beneath the gilded hooves:
it is too late it is too late
for such redundant antics
it is too late to die for mouldy truths.

Message to a Youth: Addenda:
Word has been received just now that you are granted
an extension:
You may walk about, relax and smoke, in a proscribed
dimension.

You may contemplate the Absolute and make your
last selection
Between not-doing-anything and recondite inaction.
You understand, of course,
that your decision
is conditioned by
condition.

Perhaps it would be rather more desirable, though,
If you spent your last moments at the cinema
or a burlesque show:
Better still, with simple act of copulation
Anneal the Body-Mind's frustration,
The ultimate purpose being to weld together
A vapor and a weather.

But one thing remember
It is getting late
And cold December
Will not wait
For warmth
It is getting late
And as the blue sun sinks
The prosaic Time-disc says
It is later than you think
It is

IV

Time and Place and Circumstance is uncreated
uncreative from no issue and no issue
manifest: Time and Place and Circumstance
is manifest not manifested not
above beyond but of: was not but is:
door to the room that is no room
room to the house that is no house
house to the world that is no world
and light that casts the darkness down
by which we see
voice that does not speak
and which we hear
miasma that does not rise
breath we cannot breath

door to the room
room to the house
house to the world
of no issue

and Death is instantaneous.

HARDIMAN SCOTT

Does This Green Resurgence . . . ?

Does this green resurgence scoring
Time in every tree so mark us
Indelibly, a child's crying
Anciently where his palm-lines cross?

Where snowdrop out of season wept,
Violet and brass calendine
Sprang, for those were the tears usurped
By birth, and by the wind borne down.

Saplings woo the fertilising
Air, and hedgerows crackle with fire,
Throwing their sparks like thrushes' song
White printed on the sombre fir.

And even the laggard ash spurts
Its torches in fan-like flame,
And in the meadows the lambs sport
And wag like clumps of hawthorn plume.

In this, are we alone unborn,
In the sap some conformation
Weave in us, where the past years burn
To the ash our old attrition?

We bear the infecundity
Of lust, our spoilt and only child;
And born out of our element,
Are we alone unreconciled?

Almost Love

It was just one of those things. Both Fatso and I had known her a long time ago. She was a short, dark girl, on the plump side, and we remembered her as a very swell person. Every once in a while one of us would say when were we going to look Frances up, and the other would say that was a good idea, why didn't we? We know that she was living somewhere in New York City, but we never did anything about it, and then late one Sunday afternoon after we had been to the park in Fatso's car because the day was so nice and there was nothing better to do we were on the way home; and we passed Frances walking along the street. So Fatso offered to drive her wherever she was going, which happened to be her mother's home.

"You know," he said to her, "I've been meaning to look you up for some time but I didn't know how to get in touch with you. In fact I'm going to be in New York tomorrow, and I'd like to see you."

"What do you mean *I*?" I said. "I thought *we* were going to look her up."

"Give me your address and phone number," said Fatso.

I wrote them down, also.

"Are you coming too, Arnold?" asked Frances.

"If you insist."

She smiled and shrugged her shoulders. "Where were you boys going?"

"Looking for fresh pineapple juice," I said. "Fatso wants fresh pineapple juice."

"What's funny about that? You see anything funny about that, Frances?"

"Oh, no," she said, "but carrot juice is what I like. If you want pineapple juice . . ."

"Not just pineapple juice," I said. "That would be easy. *Fresh* pineapple juice."

"Here it is," said Frances, "right here. That's right. See you tomorrow then, boys. Better call me first at the office."

We drove off, sitting silently. I knew what was on Fatso's mind and waited for him to speak. Finally he said: "Well, what's going to be tomorrow night?"

"What do you mean, what's going to be?"

"Well, you won't be through working until at least six, will you?"

"So?"

"Well, that means you can't get into New York until about seven. I want to meet her early and have dinner with her."

"O. K., so you take her to dinner and I'll meet the two of you afterward."

He looked at me. "Where'll we meet? I don't know where we'll be."

"Tell you what," I said. "I'll call Frances tomorrow afternoon and arrange a meeting place with her."

He stopped the car in front of my house and I got out. "Yaa, uh, O. K.," he said. "So long."

"So long."

Son of a bitch, I thought, I can't figure that guy out. Why didn't he come right out and say he wanted to be alone with her?

I went inside and phoned Frances at her parents' home. "Look, this is Arnold again. I can't make that tomorrow night, but I would like to see you."

"Oh, sure, Arnold, anytime."

"Tuesday night?"

"Well, I have a class Tuesday night at the New School, but if you want to, you can meet me afterwards at ten o'clock."

"All right, ten o'clock in front of the school."

Poor Fatso, I thought, until he meets her he'll be debating with himself whether or not to try and ditch me. But why couldn't the bastard come right out and say he wanted to be alone with her?

Tuesday afternoon I was sitting in a car on the lot, the radio was on, and I was reading Esquire. Fatso drove in, and I waited for him to come over. "Look at this," I said, "look what they're doing now." I opened the magazine to a page folded double and I spread it out. "Goddam it, two pages for a drawing of a woman saying hello into a telephone!"

"That's all right," he said. "I like that. What's the matter with you?"

"Nuts!"

"I just bought three suits."

"Three!"

"I got some shirts and ties and stuff, too."

"Are you crazy? When the hell are you going to wear three suits? You can't wear them to work. Jesus." I laughed.

"I can wear them on my night off, and during the day. Anyway, what I came here for, I want to turn the car in. Got something for me?"

"It's about time. We got some nice jobs around. Come on in and take a look."

We went into the showroom. I started to lead the way down to the rear, but Fatso stopped at a brown roadster that caught his eye. "How about this?" he asked.

"That's not for you," I said. "A beauty, isn't she?"

I loved good cars the way some salesmen love the best of the things they sell. Only I really wasn't good at selling. I kept my job because the business needed someone to sit on the big lot next door and take care of the customers who parked there; and occasionally to start the sale of a used car; usually I called someone from inside to close the sale, but I got a small commission if the sale was made. Most of the day I just sat in one of the cars and read. The job suited me fine.

"Why?" asked Fatso. "How much would it cost me?"

"Oh, you could get a good buy on it," I said "We're asking six-fifty, probably take less. But that's not the idea, the damn thing would cost you a fortune for gas. Gets about four miles on a gallon. Powerful as hell, though."

I showed him something I thought was more in his class.

"I saw the doctor this morning," he said to me suddenly.

"Yes?"

"Prostate gland."

I showed him several cars, but he wasn't interested. "What about girls?" I asked.

"Once in a while."

Nothing else would do for Fatso but that brown roadster. "Well, you know what you're doing, I hope," I said.

The car cost him four hundred dollars and his old car. He made out a check and I promised to see that everything was in order and let him know when the car was ready.

I assumed he had seen Frances the night before, but neither of us mentioned it.

That night I waited for her in the lobby of the school. Ten o'clock passed, the classes were over, and still no Frances. I waited a few minutes, thinking she might be in the john or something, and then I phoned her apartment. No answer. I dismissed from my mind the idea that I was being stood up. She had seemed very willing to see me. And yet I knew her outstanding memory of me might well be an unpleasant one: a New Year's Eve when we were in our 'teens, and I had insisted that Frances and her escort be thrown out of our party because Frances' date was broke.

I walked up and down in front of the school, wondering how much longer to wait, and then suddenly a taxi drew up and Frances got out. She was very apologetic about her tardiness, said she hadn't gone to class but had to work overtime. I was relieved to see her and said the taxi wasn't really necessary, another few minutes wouldn't have mattered. She looked at me, then she laughed and said: "Aw, what the hell. I didn't really come by taxi. I took the subway to 14th Street and got in a cab there because I didn't want you to be too angry."

"You mean you really rode in the cab for only two blocks?"

"That's right."

I laughed. I remembered that Frances, like many intelligent girls, had been the center of a large circle of male friends who regarded her as a pal, that rare thing, a woman as intelligent as they were. I was to discover also, that like most such women she regarded herself as unattractive and was proud of her "masculine intelligence." It was said of her that she could "curse like a man," and she did so frequently.

We walked to her home. I didn't like her apartment, but I liked the way she kept it. She brought out some scotch and we sat and talked. She commented sarcastically on an item in that day's newspapers: a noted liberal lawyer was defending the right of a group of fascists to free speech. "I'm not so sure he isn't right," I said.

Frances was surprised. "Weren't you in front of the church that time?" she asked.

She referred to a time when one of the churches in our city had invited an American fascist to address its forum. Even though all opposing opinion

was invited to participate and discussion was permitted from the audience, the best liberal and radical elements protested with surprising unanimity. A picket line was thrown around the church. I had taken an active part in that. "Yes," I said, "I was there, but if I had it to do over again I don't think I'd be on that picket line."

"You have changed," she said.

I did not stay much longer. She had been out pretty late the night before with Fatso and she was tired. I felt in very good spirits when I left her.

Saturday night I saw her again and we went to a mediocre play, and then back to her apartment. I made a pass at her and she responded up to a point and then she stopped and said: "What do you want from me?"

"What do you mean?"

"Well, what is it: do you want to go to bed with me? Is that it? Or is it just the hour or the fact that you're alone with me?"

"Look: I just met you really. The other times I saw you, when we were kids, it was always in a crowd of some kind, never alone."

"The trouble is," she said, "I never know how to act with you sensitive young men. You always get hurt."

I did not say anything. I felt this sort of talk useless, decided the evening had gone far enough and I had better leave.

"You know," she said, "you're not the way I expected you to be at all."

It turned out she had thought of me as dogmatic, arrogant, supercilious, something of a snob; but she had liked me. Either she had been wrong, she said, or I had changed; or more likely, a little of both. She did not say she was disappointed and would have preferred that I fit the old picture she had of me, but that was the annoying impression I received.

Still, I saw her, not frequently, but pretty regularly, after that night. Sometimes she acted very pleased to hear from me and sometimes not at all interested, but if I did not call her for a period of about three or four weeks she would want to know what had happened.

Sometimes, on his night off, Fatso liked to go out with Frances and me. (He had stopped seeing his girl friend, Gladys. She was too possessive, he said, and they did not have enough in common. Gladys, for example, hated to be among musicians with him because then she had the feeling that she was not the center of all his attention.) Fatso had begun to drink heavily and to do something seriously and often, that in the past he had only done occasionally and for amusement. That was to play dice and/or poker with the waiters and his fellow musicians at The Riverview, after work. He told me that at six o'clock in the evening his mother often had to shake him awake so he could dress and go to work. On the other hand there were nights when he could not sleep at all. And he had developed a great appetite, but his hunger was never satisfied until he had eaten many sweets. This worried him, but a medical examination revealed no reason for the craving. On Saturday nights when he had to work hardest he would take half of a benzedrine-sulphate tablet.

The strange thing was, whenever he went out with Frances and me, Fatso never wanted a girl for himself. Once, without his knowledge I had Francis

invite a friend along, and Fatso was very angry with me . . . The three of us would have dinner together, maybe take in an old movie, and then go someplace to hear someone play who Fatso thought was good. Frances knew much more about jazz than I did, and the two of them held their liquor better than I did, and often I sat stupified through their animated discussions and comparisons. Around three or four o'clock we would drive Frances home, she would kiss us goodnight, and then Fatso and I would go somewhere for coffee before driving back to Jersey.

One Saturday night Frances came in to see her family, and I took her to a local movie. Afterwards, I brought her home, and she asked me in. We could not stay in the living room because that was where Frances' uncle slept. Frances said: "Come on in the kitchen, and I'll make some coffee."

She walked into the kitchen ahead of me, and turned on the light. When I entered I must have showed I was stunned. I couldn't help it, I had never seen so many cockroaches in one place. They were crawling over everything, the sink, the range, the table, the refrigerator. "Don't let it throw you, Arnold," she said. "Don't act the sensitive young man in the home of the slut."

She swiped at the table carelessly with a cloth, and the roaches scattered. She put the coffee up, and then she held a couple of cups under the hot water a long time. I remembered how scrupulously clean her own apartment was.

After the coffee I felt very restless. I stood up, and standing over her, I bent and kissed her. She responded, but when I became more ardent she laughed and said: "No, you can't in a kitchen, Arnold."

I moved a chair close to her, sat down and put my arm around her. "Not even on two chairs," she giggled. Then she said seriously: "This is silly," and stood up and went to the sink to wash the cups. I followed her and she turned and put her arms around me and we kissed, hard.

"Oh, Arnold," she said, "I've been acting like a bitch, I've been teasing you, haven't I?"

"No! I don't feel that way at all."

I felt very depressed. My answer was a lie; if I followed her cue I could have the upper hand; in short, I could get to bed with her. She had an obsession, a code about acting like a bitch, which she said was the way most females acted. She would, she admitted, lean over backwards in order to avoid doing those things she considered bitchery. But I didn't want her to accept my advances only in order to remain true to this code of hers, which I believed was stupid and perverted. It was not that I considered myself above taking such advantage of a woman; it was just that I didn't want that sort of thing with her.

"You don't?" she said.

We were silent for awhile and then I said· "Either you have never been in love, or else the guys you knew must have been awful bastards."

Another period of silence. Then: "It's true. I've never been in love and particularly the first couple of guys weren't such a much." She laughed. "Look. I'm beginning to talk like you. I never used to say 'guys.' But how did you know?"

"A person who had participated in a reciprocal love affair wouldn't have your attitude. You know about sex, not about love. As a matter of fact you drag a sexual reference into almost everything you talk about. But to me, without love, you are still a sexually unawakened woman."

"Arnold," she said, exasperatedly, "you have such a distorted, irritating way of looking at things. You remember once we talked about virginity and I said I believed you, like many men, weren't as unconcerned about it as you said you were, even though you might hide that fact from yourself. And now you're proving that I was right. What is your attempt to minimize, to de-sexualize my sexual experiences, if not an attempt to make me out a sort of virgin? You yourself have ridiculed people who persist in believing that they are bringing to their lovers something nobody else could, something they alone are capable of giving. And what are you doing? Telling me that you can awaken me, (assuming that I am what you call unawakened) that you are offering me a unique experience I haven't had as yet?"

"Whatever I say to you or do with you, you insist on regarding as an attempt to get to bed with you! Christ!"

"Well, isn't it? Isn't that what you want? To get to bed with me?"

"Yes, damn it! But I don't want to be just another one of those cursory experiences, like the guy you happened to be with on New Year's Eve, or the first guy; just because you reached a certain age, and were the only girl in your sophisticated crowd not having an affair."

"What would you rather that I had done? Should I have stayed at home and read a book?"

"I'm not suggesting that you should have acted any differently; only I don't see any point to continuing those weak affairs."

"Don't sound so bitter about it. Of course you're offering to save me from such a fate. But if you want more than what you call a cursory experience, are you saying that you love me?"

I smiled. "I can't say that I love you, because I don't believe in love without the sex act. But look: if all I wanted to do was go to bed with you, I could have done that."

"Is that right? That sounds interesting, tell me about it."

"I could have said yes, you were teasing me and being very bitchy . . ."

"That's probably true," she said, "but you're a sensitive young man so you couldn't say that, although you might think sometime that you're sorry you didn't. Look, it's getting late, and I'm pretty tired. I think you'd better go."

I walked down the street, feeling very blue. I had not expected the conversation, the evening to turn out the way it had; although what, if anything, I really expected I don't know. And now that I thought of it there was nothing for me to be surprised at. I tried to remember all the things I had thought of saying to her beforehand, and the little I recalled appeared very silly now. The last few times she had been uncertain, unwilling to see me. Even tonight, she had seen me only because I sounded so furious on the phone. And yet, nevertheless, all along I had been confident that it would work out, that the original attraction was going to develop . . .

When I turned the corner on Clinton Avenue there was a tall, slim girl in a dark suit standing in the doorway of a store. Her face, in the reflection of the streetlight, was lined but youthful looking, and without makeup. "Hello," she said.

I walked on without answering, slower, and then I stopped down the block aways and looked back. She came after me quickly. "What are you afraid of?" she asked. "I'll show you a nice time."

Her place was a short walk away but she led me there in a roundabout route. She stopped suddenly at one point and said: "Is that fellow following us?"

We waited until the man behind us passed before she was reassured enough to continue. I had a package of lemon drops in my pocket and I offered them to her. She took one and put it in her mouth with the cellophane still on it, and then she laughed and removed the paper. There was a cat rubbing itself up against a garbage can. She gripped my arm, stopping. "Is that cat black?" she asked.

"No," I said, "dark gray."

We walked on and she told me she felt very bad doing this, she had never done it before, but her room rent was due. She began to walk more quickly suddenly, and I followed her up the steps of an old three storey house.

Her room was neatly furnished. On the bureau there was a picture of her, younger, and much prettier, and a postcard Madonna with the infant Jesus. I had a strange desire to look through the bureau drawers, to see her possessions, the things she saved, letters, trinkets, symbols. I talked to her, I said something innocuous about the picture: "Is that you?"

"What are you waiting for?" she said.

I recalled my only previous experience with a whore, several years before. I had wanted to find something out, to prove something. I thought I loved a certain girl and I wanted to know whether my feeling for her was more than sexual. I had the naive idea that if I went to a whore I would be able afterwards to view the sex act in proper perspective, and be able to isolate those feelings for which the act alone was responsible.

But there was no such ambitious undertaking behind this venture. I knew that it would somehow always be linked in my mind (unfairly?) with Frances; a silly gesture made at a relationship that had ended in an impasse.

J. C. CREWS

Forsaking Abstraction

The meditation of the man as man
is another thing than poet as poet
another thing than either poet-man
or than man-poet

The meditation on night
is another thing than night
and meditation on man
is a meditation too frightening
for either man-poet or man

All past ages are in man
all past meditations are in
the ultimate meditation
but the ultimate meditation
is neither in man nor man-poet

The ultimate meditation
for all past ages and past meditations
for all these men and poet-men
the ultimate meditation will be
not of night but in the night

Statement On Violence

The heart reclines a dead car
to the murderers of mind

The mind cuts its own throat
for the bribe of forgetting

The years lap blood
the slick hounds spurn

The street lifts silence
awaiting the clamor's cessation

The heart murmurs night
it's blood too spurned in the street

KENNETH L. BEAUDOIN

When Suddenly

When suddenly late in August
of a trying year, you see the wooded
palisades of Jersey through crisp morning's

Faultless lens, smell the blue lust
of river water lapping the firm shore,
feel the light wind blowing the turgid

Rivers of the heart, blooded
with the year's fatigue, muddy with
old habits and new necessities;

Then the mind's messengers can take wings
back from rich memories of warmer years,
to the promises lurking in the green of trees.

For every slave one day lays down his hoe
to follow paths to where the citrons grow.

WILLIAM FETT

PAINTING

KENNETH L. BEAUDOIN

Early Morning Thoughts Before a Window Looking Upon the Mississippi River

Last night the sun sank
at the foot of Common Street
between Canal Bank's granite pompousness
and Dixie Brewery's 1890 *Dome,*
like a neon sign
advertising some garish inconsequential
to a quite disinterested world.

This morning up here
a new day plays upon the river
upon the other bank willows
upon the grey tugs,
upon the Baribean commerce,
upon my eyes
like the lean thighs of a virgin,
like the bidding breasts of a virgin,
like the white fire of a virgin.

What is time but a habit of the mind:
a caesura in the rhythm of motion?
Tell me what time is but this.

I tell you the mind smoulders
in these river towns:
watching the suns set and the mornings come.
I tell you the mind smoulders,

then finally leaps
like the flaming trout from the turgid water,
toward the lure of meaning:
the mind building this hurdle of words . . .
this inconostasis
before the treasure box: the box
that holds the bones.

A Handful of Stars

"We could go to the concert," he said.

"Do we have the money?" she asked him.

He took a thin, leather wallet out of his pocket and he showed it to her with some amount of pride and a great deal of disgust.

"It's empty," she said, looking up into his face.

"Remember when we had fifty-three dollars," he said.

She nodded and smiled.

"That was when we first met," he said.

"We were going to take a trip to California."

"It was cold."

She laughed softly. "You said that there was a very good chance of our freezing to death it was so cold."

"We might have," he said. "We could have frozen to death in that room and no one would have loved us or hated us for it." He saw an old man pushing a hot dog stand stop a few yards away and a lot of kids gathered around him. "Maybe they would have pitied us," he said, turning to her. "Maybe they would have pitied us, because pity is weak and that's what most of them are."

"We could have gone to more than a dozen concerts then," she said. "We could have gone to Philadelphia on a train to see a concert. Or to Boston. We could have gone almost anywhere."

"I meant the concert here in the park," he said.

She took hold of his hand and she pressed it warmly. An old woman sat down on the other end of the bench. She began reading a newspaper, but they didn't see her

"We could sit down by the lake," he said. "You can hear the music down there. They always play loud enough."

"Let's just sit here," she said.

He drew his hand away from her. He leaned over and he picked up a few pebbles from the walk. They were gray, almost white, and he thought that they would probably look like stars if he could throw them up high enough. And he was holding on to them now. They almost belonged to him. "Look," he said.

She leaned over so she could see what he had in his hands.

"Pebbles," he said.

The old woman glanced over her newspaper. She wasn't reading the front page.

"Do you think I could sell them?" he asked her.

"The pebbles?"

"Sure."

She leaned back. "Whatever gave you an idea like that?"

"I've got an empty wallet, haven't I?"

The old woman turned back to her newspaper, but she kept staring at a picture of a little Chinese boy who was heating a can of American beans over a fire he had built in the middle of a road and a lot of army trucks had been held up for fifteen minutes because he wouldn't get out of the way, the caption said.

"The way I look at it," he said. "Just because it's summer now, you can't be too sure, because it will begin to snow again soon and then people will be freezing to death all over the place."

"We didn't freeze," she said.

"We could have."

He watched the old man with the hot dog stand walk towards the lake and a lot of kids followed him, because he had on a hat with a feather in it and he was singing a song in Italian that none of them understood.

"But there's bound to be a concert somewhere tonight where we could go and sit in soft seats if we had the dough."

"We can walk down to the lake."

"No. I don't mean sitting on a stone with a lot of guys selling hot dogs and root beer."

'You said it would be fine just a couple of minutes ago."

"I only said it was possible. Almost anything is possible." Because there was freezing to death and trying to understand songs being sung in Italian and continents too far away to imagine.

"The music will be loud enough and we'll be able to hear it."

"Look," he said, leaning back and still holding the pebbles in his hand. "Now what do these pebbles remind you of?"

"Don't be silly."

"It's important," he said. "It means a lot more than the fifty-three dollars could ever have meant."

She looked at them, but there wasn't the depth of the earth as pictured in scientific diagrams or beautiful poetry.

"What do they remind you of?"

She looked up. "Pebbles," she said.

They had to carry the little Chinese boy out of the way and they forgot all about the can of American beans and they hung up a flag in the next town and glory be to God and all of the angels, but the civilization had come to land at last and there were great times ahead, a quote said.

"No," he said. He got up and walked a few feet. Then he turned around and he held the pebbles up against the sky, because he knew it was there. "*Now* what do they remind you of?"

The old lady put the newspaper down and she felt very sad about the little Chinese boy and the can of American beans because there were a lot of pictures and quotes and all kinds of things, but nobody in the whole paper said what happened to the little Chinese boy.

"Pebbles," she said.

"No." He shook his head. "If I could throw these all the way up to the sky, what would they look like then?"

"I don't know. How would I know."

"Pardon me, young man," the old lady said. "But if you could throw these pebbles all the way up to the sky—when they fell down—do you think they would fall in China?"

"They might," he said. "Almost anything is possible."

The old lady smiled. "You really do think so." She picked up the newspaper.

"There's a good chance."

"And if they did reach the sky—oh, I'm perfectly sure they would— " She nodded vigorously. "They would be stars then, wouldn't they?"

He looked at the young girl. "That's what I was talking about," he said. "Didn't you see?"

The young girl turned her head away from him and she began to cry.

The old lady looked very bewildered because she felt sad herself, but she didn't want to make anyone else cry because there were so many already.

He gave her his handkerchief and he said, "What's wrong?" She shook her head and she tried to turn still farther away from him. "I didn't say anything to make you cry."

"Is there anything I can do?" the old woman asked.

"I don't know," he said. "I don't even know what she's crying about."

She began crying louder. He tried to look into her face but she always turned away and she'd cry louder every time he tried.

The old woman moved over next to her and she asked her if there was anything she could do. The young girl shook her head.

"I just said they would be stars," he said, looking very sad and bewildered. "I can't see anything wrong in that."

The young girl looked up. She kept back a few sobs. "But I didn't know," she said, breathing unevenly and sobbing along with her words. "I never seem to know anything like that."

"Well, gosh . . . hardly anybody does," he said. He turned to the old woman. "Isn't that right?"

"Of course it is," the old woman said.

"But you kept asking me," the young girl said. "And I didn't know. I didn't know anything about China or the stars or anything."

"Well, nobody does," he said. "Even most of them at the concert, sitting on those soft seats. Hardly any of them know." He held the pebbles up so she could see them. "Why I'll bet if I got up on the stage and I asked everybody there what these looked like—they wouldn't know."

The young girl blew her nose and she looked up at him like a little child who had grown sad over too many things.

"Even if I shouted as loud as I could, I'll bet they wouldn't know."

"But what about China?" she asked.

The old woman didn't remember if they had said the little boy cried or not. There had been the movie page and the comics and the stock page and a lot of other things, but she couldn't remember any page about whether the little boy cried or not.

"If I threw these pebbles up and they reached the sky, they'd be stars and if they fell down, there'd be a good chance of them falling on China."

"You do really think so," the old woman said.

"Sure," he said.

The young girl put his handkerchief into the pocket of her dress. No one said anything for a few seconds and then the young girl looked up and she said, "If they did fall on China, do you think they could do any good?"

"There's a little boy in China," the old woman said quickly. She reached for the newspaper. "There's a picture of him right here in the paper." She looked for it.

"Do you think he'd find it?" the young girl asked.

"He probably doesn't know anything about it," the young man said. "But I'll bet he'd sure know it if he found it in the rice fields or whatever they have over there."

"Here it is," the old woman said, handing him the paper. "There's the picture."

The young man studied it carefully for a few moments and then he handed it to the young girl. He shook his head and he looked around him, waking up in a strange room and not being able to recognize anything there. "It's the saddest thing I've ever seen," the young man said very sorrowfully. "And they don't even say what happened to him." He sat down next to the young girl and he began turning all the pages carefully and he looked over at the old woman and he said, "Not one word. They've got all kinds of stuff, but they don't have one line about what happened to the kid."

"What does that mean?" the young girl asked him

"Don't cry this time because you don't know," he said. "Don't cry, because I don't think anybody really knows."

"I've been looking in the papers for over seven years now," the old lady said. "And I haven't found anything at all about the little boy."

The young man looked at the date on the top of the paper.

"Yes. It's seven years old," she said. "I bring it to the park with me every day and I read it through because I think somewhere there has to be something about him."

"I don't read the newspapers," the young man said.

"I do," the young girl said. "But I didn't know anything about the pebbles or about China."

"There's got to be something," he said. "Somewhere there *has* to be something."

"Why don't you throw the pebbles up?" the old lady said. "They might reach the sky and then if they fall on China, maybe he'd find them and then one of the newspapers might write a story about a little boy finding a fallen star and we would know what happened to him."

"And I was thinking about selling them," he said, shaking his head in disgust. "I was going to sell them to a lot of guys sitting in the concert halls who didn't know what the hell Brahms or George Gershwin were all about, just because I was afraid of freezing to death." He kept shaking his head pathetically, and staring down at the pebbles in his hand as if they could have been the entire form of the earth. "If I would have sold them," he said, "They never would have had any kind of a chance of getting to China or anywhere else."

"It's all right now," the old lady said.

"We don't really need the money," the young girl said. "We still have a few cans of beans in the room that we can eat and we can hear the music down near the lake."

"But what if I can't reach the sky?" he said, suddenly looking very frightened. "What happens then?"

"We'll run as fast as we can," the young girl said. "We'll reach the lake before they could fall back down again."

"I'll walk the other way," the old lady said.

"I love you," the young girl said. "Don't you see that? I wouldn't have cried if I didn't And this way, we'll both know that we tried as hard as we could—even when we could have sold them to go to the concert hall. We'll always hope for the pebbles."

"I'll throw them as hard as I can," he said.

"I love you very much," the young girl said. "That's how I know for sure now that we'll be able to hear the music down near the lake."

"We won't ever read the newspapers again," he said, smiling now. "Because when it falls and the kid picks it up, we'll know before any of the papers."

The old lady picked up the newspaper and singing an old song she hadn't sung in a long time, she began walking the other way, wondering if the children would know the song even if they couldn't understand any of the words.

And the young man rolled up his shirt sleeves and taking careful aim for the sky, he threw all of the pebbles as hard as he could and then they ran together, faster than they had ever run before, wanting to reach the lake in time, because the music would fade into nothingness and there would be no telling if it had ever been there at all.

INGEBORG KAYKO

Florida Key

Here where the gulls breed
morning glories belie the ground's
fierceness, the rocky heart
mortally cleft in the growing.

Improbable history
once cut this heaven into hours
above the isle whereof
men knew the harbor name.

No ruins intone a choir
for our desire to mourn.
In a year's leafing
vines make a wilderness.

The crab shell, the fish head
on the arid beach blanching
are nearer grief than the unguessed
hearthplace where palms root.

Peace

He thought that peace would come like gold
and change the substance of the air.
It came as something small and cold.

And when he looked, he was not there.
Too great a word had worn away
his self built round a single care.

There was no meeting on the way
between a self and peace that had
both without reason gone astray.

He saw the land and was not glad,
he saw his face and knew it old,
and peace was gold but for the dead.

Seascape

The sand lies snow-twin under the moon tonight
in a beachen landscape of water and huddled stone.
The wind has made us too light in flesh and bone,
inbound from waters beyond the rim of the tide.

Higher than wind the clouds assault in a layer
the rainbow court about the beneficent moon.
Burning their lives out as we, but not quite so soon,
the stars fly higher than moon, remote past prayer.

To know that we, metamorphosed to specks in the air,
will still partake of such nights a hundred years hence
is surpassing strange, but stranger the lasting sense
that we also were here before our single souls were.

In the passing from night into night will our atoms recall
how this encounter between us perfumes like a flower
the barren fields of the universe for an hour
while from the luminous clouds the moonshadows fall?

Requiem

They who fell like hastened wheat in May
lie beyond our pity stark and still.
Hate will draw no blossoms from a grave,
of the twilight flowers of lament
they can weave no coronets for their hair.

Nameless grown beneath the weight of war,
briefly shrouded in our memory,
in a cloth of subtly blanching hue,
soon the last of them attains to earth
and the enemy dead are also earth.

What we know not yet they learned and spoke
to their last horizon, angel-void:
Death is desert fruit and sere with drought,
and the enemy die in equal thirst
for the gentle garden founts of home.

JAN BREVET, Jr.

Poem

After World War II the unrest, the frustration,
somewhat psychopathic, and the hard shelled laughter
to hold back reality, the threat of atomic power
being let loose in another war, World War III cuts
like a knife against the mothers still fresh with
their wounds of sons lost in this war

and the roses arranged like
memories in a bowl (form a sonnet)

who arranged these roses in a bowl
prepared a silent statement of to-morrows
prepared the many sharp slit-throated sorrows
and silence trickling red from punctured hole.

these open roses like ragged mouths in smoke
mingled with the powder burns of flesh
are crumpled and forgotten in the hush
of water . . . treat it merely as a joke . . .

a joke and then another and another
laughter is best when laughter is all left
or suicide of light a noose around your neck
that snaps the spinal column . . .
pain: sharp
as the memory of his grief-stricken mother
carrying a dead son within her heart . . .

Peter and the Blue Tree

Father belched a gaseous breakfast odor that hung like curtains in the room. He patted his stomach and his gorged eyes oozed. "Good breakfast," he grumbled, shoving himself away from the table.

Peter trembled to watch the monster sway across the room, pause at the door, take his axe with its shining blade, and turn to his son, commanding, "You git the house cleaned up good by the time I come back, you hear?"

Peter nodded his thin head vaguely, memorizing a blue tree of veins in his hand. He did not watch Father's figure blot out the sunlight the open door let in. Secretly, when Father's feet stamped toward the woods on the ground outside, Peter felt the bulge of the blue tree, smiling cleanly to himself.

H thought of himself as a blue tree burning, high on a snowpeak, only himself there with flames curling like hair around his branches. But before that would have been a long time of standing there, the gold sap running through him in spring and the heavy snow bearing on him in winter. A blown seed would have brought him to life. No monstrous father would shake huge limbs above his head. When he was ready to die, as he was now, the sunlight would burn him and the snow cover his ashes.

Rage boiling like hot tar in his brain, he looked at the plates and pans on the sink. The round holes of the pans were mouths, streaming with second hand breakfast. The plates were eyeballs to be smashed and gouged. The eyes of his father. He slid his arms across the tabletop, opened them like scissor blades, and listened delighted to the cups and plates and silverware clattering on the floor. He danced over to the sink, picked the plates and pans up one at a time, threw them against the walls, his nerves rubber bands dangling with their loops all cut.

From deep in the woods came the ring of Father's axe on a tree. As regular as the rhythm the bed used to make when Mama lived.

Peter opened the door. Mountains smothered him with white beauty and sky fell over him like a blue silk tent. Pinetrees showered green and gold patterns beyond the meadow. Their inaudible music pleaded for his presence. Leaving the door open, he ran to be among his people.

Once in the woods he flung his arms around a tree, embracing it. "Father is killing one of your sisters in the other woods," he said; "The same way he killed Mama."

Suddenly Peter let go the tree. He took off his clothes daintily, letting each piece float to the ground. "I am a tree letting my leaves fall off," he said.

He stood naked, sunlight making yellow wounds on his body. He searched his hand for the blue tree, but it had shrivellel and died under the cold skin. It didn't matter. He had kept in alive in his head.

He ran through the woods with lithe improbable speed. His feet were white deer leaping. He did not feel the pricks of the pineneedles or the water like wind through which his movement was neither swimming nor running but the essence of both. Identity fell away as his clothes had fallen, as tree leaves fall, a floating piece at a time.

Panting, he sat on a rock at the other edge of the woods where the mountains began their steepness. The man-thing yearned up the crags but the boy-thing pulled it back to the womb.

Mama was a dryad come out of a tree, caught by a woodchopper and imprisoned in his house. She sat disconsolately behind the square of light through which she could not move. All day long the axe's ringing resounded, each stroke a blow in her body, until at sunset she spread her hair over her arms and cried. When the brute returned he carried her upstairs to bed where he chopped all night long at her as he had chopped at the trees. She had split finally to let Peter out.

A cold wind blew through the warmth of the wombdream. Peter felt the sharpness of rock on his buttocks, the purple of mountain evening behind his eyes. Father blocked out sunlight in a remembered doorway, holding a sharp star on a stick in his hand.

It was embodied panic that felt its way back through the woods, that fell and picked itself up again, that fell and could not pick itself up.

Gradually, a spreading drop at a time, light filled the woods. Peter lay numb on a bed of needles. He painfully raised his hand, hunting again for the blue tree, but some of its sap had run out, hiding the branches.

Limping, he reached the edge of the meadow and lay on his belly in the grass. Through beating eyeballs, as if he were looking in the wrong end of a pair of binoculars, he saw the box and triangle of Father's house. A feather of smoke curled from its chimney. He saw the tiny rectangle of the door open and a miniature figure stand there, pushing its pin-sized arms upward in a stretch. Father no larger than a smallish mosquito. And so he became in Peter's mind.

He turned in his mind forever away from the house and he did not have to smash it as he had smashed the dishes. He walked through lanes of splintered sunlight, between the trees that were his people. When he began to climb the mountain, stars beat rose and green and silver patterns into his bones. Coyotes and mountain lions, catching him in the green depths of their eyes, could not imprison him. He hung on crags and lifted himself up. He dug his bare feet between the rocks. Sun burnt him and snow froze, but because in him there was nowhere the memory of Father or Mother or House of His Birth, he did not yearn backward toward what had been. And when he reached the top of the mountain he turned into a blue tree that a blown seed had brought to life.

KENNETH O. HANSON

Mirror and Device

I have bought me a hawk, and a hood,
And bells, and all; I lack nothing
But a book to keep it by.
—Ben Jonson

Once in a far land lived
a princess wondrous good
her face
acceptable unfeeling & refined
whose dreams are the days
of my life
within whose smallest act
exists
a strangeness & a danger
tempting to numismatists
to catalogue & then forget . . .
What words to mouth, what
vastness or what subterfuge
to mirror, what device will suit
inaction best I wonder . . .

The spectacle's made plain
We have no wills to live

Hamlet with his father's ghost
like your most
valuable luggage lost
in transit to the stage
too unbelievably rests
his case on fancy, sleight of hand
with solemn rabbits &
fantastic hats

Our elder statisticians nod
a famous surgeon draws our blood
& social workers lisp
in stratified dry brotherhood

sic temper paraphrase
the mortgaged matrons gaze
their whalebone stays
unmoved before the moving days

& everywhere conviction goes
disguised
or disenfranchised
wears the clothes
of Christ
whose cross no crucifixion knows

CAROL BUNDY

Jesus Is in the Garden

Jesus is in the garden of Gethsemene, sweet Son
to whom the Father has given
That here shall be the last night sounds;
The cicada shrilling in beaten hush
Against the dark thrown over
While soft green things loose gentle odor
Under dark, and finally the wind
In that great wave that draws clouds away
Unfolds the sky. Look at the moon, Saviour
It is a cold glory that with hollow light
Floats over the restless night
While the feverish here cry out
Shrinking from cool hands; Yours tomorrow.

HELEN S. SCALES

Poem

If but a single man should now resist
The sweeping current, thrusting on the shore
His thundering protest at the stream's direction
Away from simple kindness,
From rescued seas he yet might force
The scream of passionate denial
Out of the moulded mouth and draw
The limited and lovely song from the mute lips
Before the veering twilight tangles shadows
And the strange shapes of drifting leaf and bough
In night floes of delusion.

JAMES FRANKLIN LEWIS

To the Healthy Hills

AS IRON HILLS, *By Flexmore Hudson,* Robertson & Mullens, Ltd., 107 Elizabeth St., Melbourne, Australia; 1944; 151 pp.

Fifth volume of poetry by one of the finest young poets participating in the stirring literary and artistic revival in Australia today, editor of *Poetry,* esthetician and critic: *As Iron Hills* has received at lease one luke review in America, and will receive more, I have no doubt. For Hudson is not pretentious. He has climbed on nobody's bandwagon, not Harris' in Australia, or Auden's or Thomas' or Hendry's in England, or the Surrealists' in France, or those of our too many cultist critics in this country. As a matter of fact he has probably not availed himself of as much of twentieth century device as he could beneficially use; but it's his own business, and he's writing first rank poetry without it.

I don't mean, either, that he is a Cobletnz under The Southern Cross who eschews all device but "traditional verse," whatever that is. Indeed he is one of the most sensitive masters of free verse which it has been my pleasure to read. (He has perhaps, and fortunately, never read any American critic's nonsensical anatomy of that medium.) The breath-group, long or short, is perfectly natural and smooth to him; he stops his lines at a stop and does not leave his reader puzzling how the music is to be sung. It is not of free verse that I speak when I say he has neglected some of our device, for fluid verse is not a twentieth century development anyhow. I mean rather that he does not often employ symbols and associate words which deepen and richen the meaning down into subliminal dimensions. While so many of our poets, particularly in America, are trying, usually without any success at all, to accomplish the deeper levels while at the same time leaving off entirely all conscious readable surface (where structure and continuity lie), Hudson confines himself almost entirely to the readable surface. And magnificent it sometimes is. And when it's magnificent enough you don't care what else it isn't.

The book contains work ranging all the way down from three pieces of major poetry, all of them long poems, to a few little jingly satires he'd better have omitted. I do not hesitate to say that "Pranged" is one of the great tragic narratives of our language. (That is not a hazard; read it.)

"Indelible Voices," though in patches a little tedious with abstraction, is another important poem on the dilemma of our time. Hudson, in conviction and manner, somewhat corresponds both to Shelley and Whitman—probably in time will mean as much to Australia—except that he is more bitter, as bitter as they would be had they lived in our Murder Century, as Greer calls it; yet he is optimistic, too, and full of real love, as they were, and equally convinced of the basic simple goodness of men. He has not, as Stevens says of other poets, failed to join the human race; and in "Indelible Voices" he probably shows this whole position most clearly.

"Asoka" is a sort of allegorical drama in seven short scenes, in which Jasmine, poet's daughter, singer, and embodied spirit of unsullied humanity, wins the love both of Brahma, a physicist who is on the point of discovering how to release atomic energy, and Asoka, embodient of political power. She finds she cannot love Brahma (i.e. science), but instead gives herself to Asoka, the king who renounces his plans for war against Persia and Egypt and the world, and resolves to give mankind what happiness he can while life is yet possible on earth; for he knows that finally

"the spirit's flower must spend
its ultimate seeds on contraceptive stone."

Incidentally, Brahma becomes embittered with science and destroys the experiment which would have led to the atomic bomb. Throughout, this poet underestimates the hireling character of modern science. Alas, as it turned out later in the real world, the atrocity was not destroyed.

Flexmore Hudson is not the esoteric prophet which so many of us today try to be, need to be; but he is prophet nevertheless, and poet, poet of honesty, and health, and growth. Fortunately he is not entirely alone. There are more poets of honesty and health and growth in his country, and many in other countries, especially in the United States and Mexico. May their tribe increase.

A few back copies of Interim including the controversial Volume I, Number 3, are available at the regular price. Complete sets are available to libraries and collectors.

Our readers are asked to send their Christmas gift subscription lists to us as soon as possible.